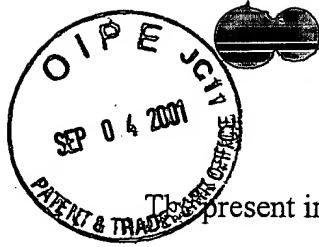


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The present invention relates generally to improvements in enhancing the wearing comfort of a brassiere, the improvements more particularly providing the user with options to achieve a balance between optimum support or nominal support but satisfying fashion demands.

Example of the Prior Art

In U.S. Patent 3,203,424 for "Brassiere" issued to S.G. Garutso on August 6, 1964, the encircling locations about the brassiere breast cups are used to advantage to attach, using VELCRO fastening strips, different selected sizes of cups in these locations and thus in covering relation over the user's breasts. Comfort is accordingly correlated to matching the sizes involved.

Underlying the present invention and in contrast to the limited use of the encircling strategic locations noted, is the recognition that providing optimum support coincident with breast-supporting means from these strategic locations is of course one option, but that providing nominal support is also another option and satisfies fashion demands, as occurred during the no-bra fashion trend of former years.

Broadly, it is an object to provide VELCRO-hook and loop type fastening strips in a brassiere construction overcoming the foregoing and other shortcomings of the prior art limited to size correlation.

More particularly, it is an object to provide two options to the user, i.e., to have optimum breast cup support in the traditional manner, or to have the equivalent of the no-bra fashion trend and its sense of nominal support and corresponding nominal movement restriction, all as will be better understood as the description proceeds.

The description of the invention which follows, together with the accompanying drawings should not be construed as limiting the invention to the example shown and described, because those skilled in the art to which this invention appertains will be able to devise other forms thereof within the ambit of the appended claims.

Fig 1 is a front perspective view of a brassiere according to the present invention with an in-use brassiere cup support;

Fig 2 is an isolated front elevational view, on an enlarged scale, of a VELCRO loop-type fastener used in attached relation on a rear surface of the brassiere;

Fig. 3 is a similar isolated view also on an enlarged scale, but in perspective and of a cooperating VELCRO hook-type fastener used optionally either in attached relation to the VELCRO loop-type fastener of Fig. 1 or removed and not in attached relation thereto; and

Fig. 4 is a perspective partial view of the brassiere as viewed from the rear and of the structure denoted by the reference arrow designated 4 in Fig. 1.

In the description which follows there is reference to the trademark VELCRO and this reference is being made within the scope of MPEP 608.01(v)(1) and intended to have a meaning which is sufficiently precise and definite to be made a part of a claim, it being understood that a loop-type VELCRO fastener is of a closed loop configuration and is comfortable to the touch, and a hook-type VELCRO fastener is of a hook configuration with an exposed point and thus is not comfortable to the touch.

In Fig. 1, there is shown a brassiere, generally designated 10, having right and left breast cups 12 and 14 worn by a user 16 with over the shoulder straps 18 and 20 positioning the brassiere cups in covering relation over her breasts 22 and 24, the use of Fig 1 being typical and one in which the user 16 will be understood to have exercised an option to have breast cup

supports 26, often referred to in the parlance of the trade as underwires, although not confined to metal construction material and including also plastic construction material, a usage, by analogy to golf, of referring to a fairway "wood" used consistent with golf parlance even though of metal construction material. For its intended end use, it suffices that each breast cup support 26 is of a U-shape as illustrated, and of U-shape-imparting construction material. The in-use option of Fig. 1 is one in which a strip of a VELCRO loop-type fastener 28 is attached by being sewn, as at 30, to a fabric U-shape trim 32, itself being sewn, as at 30, in encircling relation about the bottom of a cooperating breast cup 12, 14, in a central location, as illustrated.

Cooperating with the VELCRO loop-type fastener 28, and as best understood from Figs. 3 and 4, there is provided for each breast cup 12, 14, a fabric casing 36 in which there is disposed a shape-imparting support 38 in a U-shape, as illustrated, in assembled relation using a seam, as at 40, attaching also to the fabric casing 36 a strip of a VELCRO hook-type fastener 42 so that the VELCRO hook-type fastener 42 is in facing relation, as denoted by the dash lines 44, to the VELCRO loop-type fasteners 28 permanently sewn to the rear surface 46 of the brassiere 10. As understood, established contact of the strips of VELCRO loop-type fasteners 28 and VELCRO hook-type fasteners 42 with each other will hold throughout normal use of the brassiere 10 thus providing the user 16 with breast support.

The user 16, according to the present invention, also has the option of manually removing the VELCRO hook-type fastener 42 with its attached fabric-encased U-shape support 38 from its operative position occupied during its in-use condition of Fig 1 during which it was attached to the VELCRO-loop type fastener 28. In practice, the wearing of the brassiere 10 without the breast supports 38 satisfies fashion demands and thus, the two options provided contribute to the utility of the brassiere 10.

It is to be noted that the VELCRO loop-type fastener 28 is comfortable to the touch and thus this specific fastener which is exposed when the VELCRO-hook type fastener 42 is removed has no adverse affect on the wearing comfort of the brassiere 10, and that for this result it is therefore required that the VELCRO loop-type fastener 28 be attached to the brassiere rear surface 46 and the VELCRO hook-type fastener 42 to the removable breast cup support 38.

While VELCRO loop and hook-type fasteners herein shown and disclosed in detail are fully capable of attaining the objects and providing the advantages hereinbefore stated, it is to be understood that it is merely illustrative of the presently preferred embodiment of the invention and that no limitations are intended to the detail of construction or design herein shown other than as defined in the appended claims.